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Consumer decision making process in low and high product category involvement and the affect of marketing knowledge

Tekidou Apostolia

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Student Name: Apostolia Tekidou
SID: 1202160021
Supervisor: Dr. Kleopatra Konstantoulaki

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Abstract

This dissertation was written as part of the MSc in Management at the International Hellenic University. Social economics is a field developing in high paces for the past decades. Economists and psychologists are trying to test human behavior and marketers, following their results, come up with campaigns and means for luring consumers in specific routes and decisions. Different techniques are used in different product categories depending on the level of involvement. It is very important to asses in which level can an individual alter his/her perception of marketing and get educated in persuasion techniques to assure a more beneficial lifestyle.

The aim of this study is to explore the decision-making process in low and high involvement conditions and measure the change of the perceived marketing knowledge after the introduction of real examples of marketing techniques.

To approach the above notions, an online questionnaire was distributed and the results of one hundred respondents were analyzed. Participants' responses were measured in two different conditions. Time 1 was the first-time respondents encountered the questions and Time 2 the second time respondents had to answer the same questions. Between Time 1 and Time 2 a page of marketing techniques examples was presented. The responses received showed a different decision-making process for a low involvement product opposed to a high involvement one and also illustrated a decrease in subjective knowledge scores implying that individuals are affected by the exposure to marketing tactics and this might be a way of education.

On this basis, it is recommended that researchers keep seeking for ways to educate people in the consumer behavior context, since there is room for experiments and individuals might understand better their biased nature once introduced to real time, everyday examples.

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Keywords: consumer behavior, involvement, marketing, knowledge, persuasion

Apostolia Tekidou
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Preface

The basis of this research stemmed from my passion of exploring the consumer decision making process and assessing the rationality of humans. It is extremely connected with my line of work as I am involved in the sales department of a company and trying every day to track the way consumers think, what they know and how they eventually make up their mind in order to conclude in making a decision whether it is an important one or not. Apart from my work environment and the stimulus I take from there, this particular research is strongly based on my curiosity in human nature and the reason why behind every single one decision individuals make after being introduced to a dilemma.

As the world moves extremely fast and humans get introduced to a huge ammount of information everyday, it is important to explore our cognitive system and engage in activities that might help discover how education can potentially assist in making rational decisions. This study is a small step towards a new point of research in the consumer behavior field, trying to connect individual knowledge with consumers behavior.

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1. Introduction

This chapter presents the topic to be discussed in this thesis as well as why this is a topic of interest. It will be followed by the purpose of the research as well as an overview of the paper.

1.1 Background

Konrad Lorenz, the naturalist, made a fascinating discovery some decades ago. He discovered that baby goslings get attached with the first moving creature they see, after breaking from their eggs (Vicedo, 2009). For most of the times that creature is their mother. In Lorenz's case, he became the first "moving thing" some baby goslings encountered and from then they followed him loyally (Picture 1). The naturalist named this phenomenon "imprinting" and demonstrated that goslings actually make an important life decision once they are born, using only what's available in their environment. But if goslings are doing it, can't we as humans do the same thing with our brain?



Picture 1: Konrad Lorenz followed by geese that have imprinted on him. *Vicedo, M.m "The father of Ethology and Foster Mother of Ducks", 2009*

Despite humans being the most evolved animals cognitively, there are limits to our cognitive capacity. At the front of our brain lies an area called the prefrontal cortex. This area plays an important role in our decision-making, and really distinguishes us from other animals. Throughout evolution this part of the brain was primed for survival and efficiency, instead of carefully picking the most optimal option. Situations in which the limits of our cognitive capacity are exposed include: being presented with too much information at a single moment, causing us to filter out most of this information. Our memory is also prone to these effects, causing us to remember only the most important things. In both cases, crucial information can be lost. Sometimes, instead of getting too much information, we are presented with too little information to understand a situation, in which cases we tend to fill in the gaps ourselves. The information we use to fill in the gaps can still be incomplete, or even worse, completely wrong. Sometimes we have to make quick decisions, without having time

to thoroughly analyze the situation. In all these cases, cognitive biases are very common (Wernars, 2017).

As Dan Ariely brilliantly states in one of his TED Talks “Are we in control of our decisions”, we tend to fall for visual illusions although we have a whole part of our brain dedicated to vision and vision is something that we are trained to do every day of our lives. If it is easy to fall for visual illusions imagine how many biased decisions we make every day in fields that we are not so trained as we are in the vision field. A great example of biased consumer behavior is the most common offer of “If you buy 1, you get 50% off on the second one”. This offer is commonly used throughout the retail and e-commerce. What we don’t realize while purchasing this offer is the fact that we might not actually need a second item at all, but we buy it, because we tend to think that if we don’t, we are missing a great opportunity. By these means consumers tend to think that they are saving money while actually they are spending much more than they should normally spend. Humans as little goslings are in many cases over reliant to the first piece of information that they hear, making this information an anchor that will control their next decisions. “Imprinting” in this case is called the anchoring effect and it is one of the most robust cognitive heuristics (Furnham and Boo, 2011).

1.2 Problem and Objectives

One thing that is well established by now is that humans have often biased judgements (Chaiken, 1980; Denes-Raj and Epstein, 1994; Kahneman and Frederick, 2014; Kahneman and Egan, 2011; . Martie and Nettle, 2006). The main question is whether or not people know that they are biased. Kahneman and Frederick (2014), state that the failure to monitor our intuition is what leads us in biased judgments. There are also others who suggest that people detect that their intuitive response conflicts with logical considerations, but they behave against their better judgment, falling in the heuristics trap (Denes-Raj and Epstein, 1994).

Consumers choices are being affected from two factors: the motivation and the ability to process the available information (Petty, Cacioppo and Goldman, 1981). Petty and Cacioppo (1981) also suggest that individuals are mostly motivated when there is a personal relevance or when the decision in question is of great importance, while there is a higher ability to process product information when there is a low level of complexity or a greater time limit for making the decision. Those factors can decide whether or not a consumer will follow a systematic or a heuristic approach.

Apart from the original question and since the basic field of discussion is specifically consumer behavior, there is one very important concept to be researched, the concept of involvement. The concept of involvement has many interpretations in the literature. Researchers use the term involvement as the relationship between a person and the product or in other words how relevant the product seems to an individual (Hupfer and Gardner, 1971; Kassarian, 1981; Zaichkowsky, 1985; Zaichkowsky, 1986). Another area of involvement is the involvement with the actual purchase, the time spent in research for the product (Zaichkowsky, 1986).

The roads that a consumer will follow on the decision making are not always the same. We could not suggest that we are putting the same “effort” of thinking when trying to buy a cereal box and when deciding about a new car purchase. The aforementioned

examples are cases of low and high involvement decisions. Low-involvement purchases require no previous thought or planning. They can be impulse purchases or simply everyday routine purchases. For example, assuming you are standing in line at the supermarket waiting for your turn. You see all those chewing gums lined up and decide you want to buy one of every flavors. It is as simple as that. You just took a low involvement decision and probably forgot about it after a few minutes.

To the contrary, we all remember our high-involvement decisions since most of the times they are complex, risky and probably have a high price tag. For example, you decide to move from your apartment and start looking for a new house. It will take some time, cannot be characterized as an impulse decision and if it goes bad it will cost you. In that case do not forget the level of importance to the buyer. Importance-relevance to the buyer can also distinguish a high from a low involvement decision.

Knowing that we use different cognitive “roads” to make decisions depending on the level of involvement and keeping in mind that we are biased in many ways in our decision making it is clear that different types of biases occur depending on the level of involvement (Lastovicka and Gardner, 1978). Still the question remains, are we aware of our biases and could we actually learn from them and grow on making more rational decisions? This leads us to explore the concept of cognitive learning.

The concept of cognitive learning and attitude change through persuasion has been studied for decades. Since it is by nature a topic with routes in psychology there is still a difficulty to estimate in which level exactly can attitudes/decisions be altered by learning. As Greenwald (1968) suggested decades ago, there are findings that support attitude change through persuasive techniques but there are numerous of variables that should be considered such as “pre-existing attitudes, prior familiarity with information and comprehension of given messages”.

This paper aims to *explore the decision-making process in low and high involvement conditions and test the level of consumer choice change after understanding the concept of heuristics and persuasion marketing techniques, in comparison to their subjective knowledge on the matter. The composite nature of this study is where its novelty lies, since it provides a wide range of results, consolidating them under the context of knowledge.* A thorough literature review is presented, covering the fields of involvement in consumer decision-making process while depicting basic cognitive biases. The literacy also explores the field of consumer knowledge, setting the scene for the following research on consumer decision change and the subjective knowledge on marketing techniques. The Methodology Chapter analyzes in detail the quantitative method used, the questionnaires, as well as the sample data, demonstrating graphs and tables for the data analyzed. Methodology and data analysis are followed by the discussion chapter where findings are being discussed and compared with previous studies. The limitations of this research are presented and proposals for further research on this context are discussed.

2.Literature Review

This chapter will present a thorough research of the literacy relevant to the topics researched in this paper. The decision-making process in low and high involvement situations will be analyzed as well as the basic theoretical background of cognitive heuristics in consumer behavior and the context of consumer knowledge.

2.1 Involvement

The consumer decision making process is influenced by many factors as noted before. One of them is involvement. In the consumer behavior literacy, Involvement has been studied for many decades with a first dedicated study from Krugman, (1965) with "The Impact of Television Advertising : Learning without Involvement". Krugman 1965, linked Involvement with advertising and thus with the field of marketing. Following this, researchers started conceptualizing and measuring the involvement occurring in a purchase decision (Kahle, Beatty and Homer, 1988; Mittal, 1989) and in classes of products (Kapferer and Laurent, 1985 , 1993; Zaichkowsky, 1985). There were also many researchers that started measuring the level of consumer involvement for product categories, managing to divide them depending on the various involvement groups (Bowen and Chaffee, 1974; Wells, 1986; Zaichkowsky, 1986; Zinkhan and Fornell, 1989), and this is in fact one of the points this study is based on, the different level of involvement in product categories. The research continued regarding the topic with many arguments. In his research Kassarian (1978), argued that many of the research done in this field has been biased simply by humans own nature and mentality. What Kassarian (1978) highlighted is that low involvement in decisions exists and we cannot disregard this fact purely affected by anthropomorphism. After Kassarian, many scholars started arguing the existence of consumers that can simply make all kinds of purchases by processing the same amount of information and using complex thinking each time. Those consumers not following in some cases this complex cognitive road were introduced as the low involvement consumers (Gardner, Mitchell and Russo, 1978; Kassarian, 1981; Petty, Cacioppo and Schumann, 1983; Zaichkowsky, 1986). The concept of involvement has been also linked and studied with various marketing concepts like brand loyalty and switching, market segmentation, advertisements and perceived risk (Dholakia, 1997; Muncy, 1990; Petty, Cacioppo and Goldman, 1981; Zaichkowsky, 1985, 1994).

Trying to explore the route to persuasion Petty *et al.* (2005), identified a consumer's level of involvement while processing a message as a fundamental aspect. Developed theories as the Heuristic- Systematic Model (Chaiken, Liberman and Eagly, 1989) and the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) (Petty, Cacioppo and Schumann, 1983; Petty *et al.*, 2005) state that a systematic road to persuasion will be followed in situations where there is a higher consumer's motivation and ability to process. At the opposite case consumer's will follow heuristic cues to message processing. Johar and Sirgy, (1991), supporting the aforementioned, also note that highly involved consumers are motivated and more prone to follow a functional cognitive process, while the cognitive resource matching hypothesis (CRM) also predicts that a message can be persuasive if there is a "matching" of an individual's processing level with the final decision (Coulter

and Punj, 2004; Keller and Block, 1997). Brown, Homer and Inman (1998), enhancing the abovementioned, suggested that individuals follow highly diagnostic routes-higher cognitive effort, evaluating product attributes and performance information, when dealing with high product category involvement situations. Consequently, people tend to follow a peripheral route, superficial analysis and evaluation of available information projected, when dealing with low product category involvement (Coulter, 2005).

Separating consumers to high and low involvement there are different stimulus that can evoke feelings for every group and lead to a certain choice. Under high involvement conditions, individuals seek for more informational and utilitarian features of the product in order to finalize a decision (Ahmed *et al.*, 2004; Erevelles, 1998; Johar and Sirgy, 1991). On the other hand in low involvement conditions, consumers seek only the readily available information engaging in routine decisions (Coulter, 2005).

Following the rationale based on the abovementioned, we are leaded to *Hypothesis 1*: Consumers in high product category involvement situations will examine the given information most likely following a central route, avoiding cognitive biases, while in low product category involvement conditions will follow a peripheral route to persuasion, thus being susceptible to cognitive biases.

2.2 Heuristics

In the process of connecting cognitive heuristics and consumer behavior we investigated the routes of the word per se. "Heuristic", based on Gigerenzer (2008), is originated from the Greek word "heuriskein" meaning "find out, discover, thus the word per se can be presented as a means to a discovery a solution or a way to find out a path. In the psychology literature, Bottom (2004), quoting Tversky and Kahneman (1973), explained heuristics "as cognitive pathways that reduce the complex tasks of assessing probabilities and making predictions to a simplified set of judgmental operations". Since heuristics can be applied almost on every decision making condition, their most interesting characteristic is that they are extremely powerful, thus can be easily generalized to different situations (Gigerenzer, 2008).

Heuristics use structures of environments, therefore there is no strict answer to whether they are rational or irrational, because all that heuristics do is being relative to a specific environment (Chase, Hertwig and Gigerenzer, 1985; Gigerenzer, 2008). Simon (1990), had an ecological view of rationality and heuristics, viewing the human rational behavior as a pair of scissors, with one blade being the mind and the other one the environment. Scissors cannot cut without using both blades, thus his view of rationality was the cognitive structures and the environment matching.

The most commonly used heuristics can be categorized in three types. The availability heuristic can be summarized into a person's ability to rely on available recalled information in order to decide. Individuals think that if something can be easily recalled from memory it must be of importance. Next there is the anchoring where in that case people get attached to the first piece of available information and set it as the "anchor"-reference point until they conclude to a point close or further away of the "anchor" depending on the decision at hand. Last, we have the representativeness.

This heuristic relies on similarity and categorizes objects or notions based on the category prototype. (Bottom, 2004)

In the consumer behavior area heuristics are mostly researched to evolve new marketing strategies and in relevance with persuasion (Bettman, Johnson and Payne, 1991; Coulter and Punj, 2004; Denes-Raj and Epstein, 1994; Harris and Blair, 2006; Urbany, Dickson and Wilkie, 1989). Bettman, Johnson and Payne (1991), amplify the notion that consumers rely mainly on shortcuts when it comes to decision making, without engaging in evaluation of alternatives and extensive research. Heuristics also help consumers eliminate the perceived risks that underline in the pre purchase information seeking (Sheth and Venkatesan, 1968). For instance there have been noted cases of product knowledge uncertainty where consumers not willing to spend time searching, preferred buying a bundle of the product (Harris and Blair, 2006; Urbany, Dickson and Wilkie, 1989). Employing the anchoring heuristic consumers might also purchase bundles and bigger quantities if they come across multiple unit pricing strategies (Wansink, Kent and Hoch, 1998). Another common example of anchoring is the fact that consumers might consider the price of product appealing if it is projected as a discount while the same price as regular price would even be considered expensive (Urbany, Dickson and Wilkie, 1989).

Heuristics open the door to cognitive biases. At this point we will showcase indicatively the most common ones. The bandwagon effect or the conformity effect is based on the probability that one person will adopt a belief (buy a product), based on the number of people that hold that belief (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). Another common bias is stereotyping where in that case people are categorized in groups, based on some of their characteristics without having real information about them (Cuddy, Fiske and Glick, 2007). Furthermore, we can identify also the authority bias. This cognitive bias describes people's tendency to weigh the opinion of an authority figure more heavily. Also, they are more easily influenced or convinced by authority figures (Wernars, 2017). Last but not least the failure to identify your own cognitive biases is in fact a bias itself. As many researchers suggest, people acknowledge the existence of cognitive biases mostly in others rather than themselves (Denes-Raj and Epstein, 1994; Pronin, Gilovich and Ross, 2002).

2.3 Knowledge: Objective and subjective

Since people acknowledge the existence of cognitive biases mostly in others, it can be assumed that there is a respective knowledge in the matter of consumer decision making but this knowledge is not used when their own interest is at stake. Individuals perception of their knowledge in different matters can be blur, since in many cases people can not make the distinction between subjective and objective knowledge, thus confuse the information stored in their memory or information understood by them in a specific way, with those of their actual knowledge (Brucks, 2014).

Behavioural economists and social psychologists have found that knowledge is one of the prior factors that has a great influence in the way buyers deal with information in different products and services and conclude in making decisions. Through this research the field of consumer knowledge has been studied and analysed in three separate categories: objective knowledge, subjective knowledge and prior experience

(Brucks, 2014; Carlson *et al.*, 2009). Objective knowledge refers to an individual's actual knowledge in a matter while subjective knowledge refers to what an individual think that he knows about a specific matter. Prior experience is defined as the amount of purchases or usage experience an individual has with a specific product.

In many cases people do not understand how much of what they know is in fact objective or subjective. Thus, consumers might have a subjective knowledge on marketing and persuasion techniques and confuse it ,as Brucks (2014) states, with their objective knowledge, leading to biased decisions or confident purchases that turn out to be misjudged. In the relative literacy Jacoby, Speller and Berning (1974), stated that individuals get affected in a major way by information and the way this information is perceived by them, rather that the actual source. This statement was afterwards supported and enhanced by the notation that consumer choices het influenced by the effect of the information an individual receives and not so much by the actual nature of information. Perception per se seems to play a major role in the decision making process and perceived knowledge (subjective) was found to be negatively correlated with the information acquired by consumers during purchases and consumption of goods (Park, Gardner and Thukral, 1988; Stein *et al.*, 1984). Since perceived information affect consumers choices, those with high belief of self-knowledge would be less likely to ask for more information before concluding to a purchase or decision, leading to the notion that proper education might expand consumers stored knowledge and potentially shrink an individuals over reliance on easily available information (House *et al.*, 2004).

2.4 Heuristics and Persuasion

Overreliance to information leads consumers to the phenomenon of getting highly affected by marketers with various persuasion techniques that are taking advantage of the aforementioned heuristics and the gap of self-knowledge understanding. A few decades ago the consumers knowledge of persuasion techniques started being researched as Friestad and Wright (1994), used the term Persuasion Knowledge, stating that individuals gain through intuition and practice the knowledge of how marketing and marketers manage to persuade them. Through this scope, the Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM) was introduced and it suggests that consumers use intuitive theories of how someone might try and manipulate them using persuasion techniques and taking advantage of the heuristics, and try to examine marketers techniques and other persuasion attempts (Friestad and Wright, 1994).

In most cases, people unfamiliar with heuristics and marketers tactics might use their intuition and sometimes recognise persuasion techniques and means, but might not have the knowledge to manage them (Friestad and Wright, 1994). Yet, with practice and exposure to different types of tactics, they can interpret better and evolve self-control in coping with them (Ericsson and Smith, 1991). Practice in this case has many interpretations. One could be by simply observing persuasion tactics, or even evolving a managing tactic and use this tactic for ones own benefit. All those steps are categorized as reactive procedures since an individual gets exposed to a persuasion technique first and then starts the cognitive and practical practice process (Friestad and Wright, 1994). After having some first indications of all the above, training programs were designed for young and adult consumers about advertising techniques

and the way those techniques might influence a choice or even a habit and Gaeth and Heath (1987) concluded that after training, consumers coped relatively better with misleading advertising.

The implication of the PKM, that in fact consumers can identify persuasion styles and dodge persuasion routes on a small scale, also implies that with coaching maybe they can cope better and better and why not start utilizing the full capacity of their cognitive system. Although that is a clear notion, in the relevant literacy on increasing resistance to persuasion there are no findings on how to educate people regarding specific persuasion techniques (Bither, Dolich and Nell, 1971; McGuire, 1964; Szybillo and Heslin, 1973). Specifically in research on consumers habit of asking friends or family of what to buy (Bearden, Netemeyer and Teel, 1989) and about consumers self-knowledge on handling generally the influences of their social network (McGuire and Padawer-Singer, 1976; Nisbett and Gordon, 1967; Silvera, Lavack and Kropp, 2008), there were no direct implication or question about consumers knowledge of persuasion techniques.

All the above lead us to *Hypothesis 2*. Consumers might change their initial perception of knowledge on marketing after being introduced to the concept of heuristics and persuasion techniques used by marketers.

3. Methodology

This chapter introduces the research approach of this study as well as the methodology used to implement the research. A recap of the research questions is presented, as well as the main sample of the research, the questionnaire used and how data was collected. Finally, focus is given on the data analysis and findings of the quantitative method implemented.

3.1 Research Hypothesis

After a thorough literature review of the consumer decision making process in low and high involvement situations, and the cognitive capacity of individuals in marketing techniques, it is expected that the results of the study will probably showcase the below:

- Participants in low involvement situations will conclude easily to a choice without asking for more information or stressing to make the correct choice
- Participants in high involvement situation will most likely ask for more information before making a choice
- Participants will most likely change their initial choice after being introduced to marketing techniques
- Participants will score high on subjective knowledge before being introduced to specific marketing techniques and lower afterwards.

3.2 Approach – Questionnaire

To approach the abovementioned questions and assess data in a structured manner a quantitative method was used. A questionnaire was built with questions regarding the below categories:

- Demographics
- Low involvement offer choice
- High involvement offer choice
- Subjective marketing knowledge
- Examples of marketing techniques connected with cognitive biases

After these categories were tested, participants were asked to answer again the same questions for low and high involvement offer choice and assess once again their subjective knowledge. The questions were asked in the exact abovementioned order. As followed by previous studies, in order to test subjective knowledge, participants should assess their knowledge first in the field of interest, then being introduced to the topic and afterwards assess it again (House *et al.*, 2004). This method was used for the final assessment.

3.2.1 Demographics

The first section of the questionnaire consisted of four questions designed to illustrate basic demographic information about the participants. Participants were asked to complete their sex, age, profession and educational level. Regarding sex, participants simply chose between Male and Female. Respondents also stated their age group, selecting among five groups (18-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56+). The profession category consisted of seven groups: the civil servant, employee, freelancer, retired, household, student and unemployed. Last, participants selected their highest educational level amongst six categories: primary education, secondary school, high school, bachelor degree, Masters degree and a PhD degree as well as their educational level in Marketing selecting between No education, seminars, Bachelor, Master or PhD degree.

3.2.2 Low involvement and High involvement product offer

At this part of the questionnaire respondents were asked to choose the best product offer among three choices regarding two different types of products (low and high involvement).

The first product offer was about refreshments – low product category involvement (Zaichkowsky, 1986), and stated:

“Which one of the following offers would you choose if you wanted to buy refreshments (all offers refer to the same brand)?”

And the available answers were:

1. 2 refreshments for €1.3
2. 1 dozen & half a dozen for €10.84
3. 5 refreshments & 1 gift for €3.55
4. I would seek for more information before purchasing

From the above answers the most attractive one is option number 3 that gives a unit price of €0.59/refreshment. Offers are real and drawn from a large Greek supermarket.

The second product offer was about a car – high product category involvement (Zaichkowsky, 1986), and stated:

“Which one of the following offers would you choose if you wanted to buy a new car (all offers refer to the same brand)?”

And the available answers were:

1. Car with 2 years warranty & free service for 1 year € 15.300
2. Car with 2 years warranty for € 15.000
3. Car with 2 years warranty & free service for the first six months for € 15.000
4. I would seek for more information before purchasing

Option number 1 is the most attractive one based on value for money deal in that case, but options number 2 and 3 might be perceived as better because of the same pricing used. Option 2 is placed as the decoy option, same pricing with option 3 but inferior attributes and belongs here to illustrate whether or not consumers might get affected by its presence and choose option 3 although option 1 is superior.

3.2.3 Subjective knowledge

After answering two questions choosing the most attractive offer to them, respondents start testing their subjective knowledge on marketing per se and

persuasion techniques. Subjective knowledge was measured on a five-point Likert scale and the structure of the questions used was based on previous studies measuring this specific variable (Flynn, 1999). Five questions were used and asked:

- *I am familiar with the marketing tactics companies use to direct consumers in certain decisions.*
- *I am familiar with the fact that consumers make certain decisions based only on the easily available information.*
- *I am familiar with the fact that in many cases prices introduced as offers are the initial product prices, and marketing of companies use this tactic to take advantage of the fact that consumers rely heavily on easily available information.*
- *I am familiar with the fact that there are many fake offers especially online to lure consumers in specific choices.*
- *I am familiar with the fact that the way an offer is phrased might affect a consumer's choice.*

These questions aim on one hand to measure the subjective knowledge of the sample and on the other hand to indirectly inform respondents on the tactics used by marketers.

3.2.5 Examples – Marketing techniques

After the first assessment of respondent's subjective knowledge, a part of examples of marketing techniques was introduced. No action was required from the participants at this point, only reading and comprehension. The examples used were taken by Ariely (2008), and were the following:

Example No 1 "Subscription offer"

Magazine X displays the below offers and each one has the mentioned acceptance:

1. Online subscription €30 → 16% acceptance
2. Hard copy subscription €50 → 0% acceptance
3. Online & hard copy subscription €50 → 84% acceptance

Afterwards, Dan Ariely conducted an experiment using only the below mentioned offers and the results are demonstrated (Ariely, 2008):

1. Online subscription €30 → 68% acceptance
2. Online & hard copy subscription €50 → 32% acceptance

The results shifted completely after excluding the middle offer that no one preferred in the first place.

Example No 2 "Consent Form"

Germany and Austria demonstrate different acceptance rates in organ donations (Germany 12%- Austria 99%). The difference in those two countries lies on the phrasing of the consent form.

The form in Germany concludes with the phrase: "Tick the box if you wish to participate in the organ donation program".

The form in Austria concludes with the phrase: "Tick the box if you do NOT wish to participate in the organ donation program".

3.2.5 Recap of questions (excluding demographics)

At this stage, participants were asked to answer again the same first two questions regarding the product offerings (low and high category product involvement) as well as assess once again their subjective knowledge on the matter in hand. This stage as stated in the beginning of this chapter was inserted following the research of House *et al.* (2004) on objective and subjective consumer knowledge.

3.2.6 Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed in Greek and was computerized using Google Documents. The beginning of the survey was a paragraph explaining the nature of the research and its purpose as well as the time needed to complete it. This is a very important element on every research since it is crucial for the participants to know exactly how much time it is required in order to get engaged in the first place as well as the reason behind answering the questions following. Questionnaire included mostly closed-ended questions and participants were Greeks above the age of 18 in order to ensure that they were eligible to purchase goods and think independently.

To ensure that the survey was valid a pilot study was conducted among twenty participants. The participants were 10 males and 10 females, with differences on their educational level. The pilot study did not indicate any issue or invalid questions, respondents reviewed the questionnaire and the time needed for the completion, thus the final survey was developed (Appendix).

The final survey was developed via Google Forms and all questions were mandatory in order to move on to the next one. To ensure time and cost saving as well as access to a large sample, questionnaires were distributed online through email and social media and the approximate time for completion was fifteen minutes. The link was available for a period of a month during September 2018 since in Greece after the summer period, September is a highly productive month with individuals returning to their base and dedicate time to new requests. Participants were introduced to the questionnaire with the below briefing: "Thank you very much for the time you decided to dedicate and your help in our effort. This questionnaire should be completed only by adults (over the age of 18). It has been compiled in the context of a Master of Science thesis for the International Hellenic University and aims to explore the consumer behavior of citizens and their familiarity with marketing practices. The results of the survey will remain confidential and will be used only for the purposes of this research. You are encouraged to answer the questions in order without returning to previous ones. The survey is anonymous and your honesty is requested. Survey results will be used exclusively for research purposes. You will need approximately fifteen minutes to complete the survey. Thank you in advance for your time.

Shall you have any queries do not hesitate to conduct us via email."

After *one hundred respondents* had completed the survey and the period of one month had ended, the final results were collected using Google forms and exported to Microsoft Office Excel in order to begin the assessment. The final analysis of the results was performed after all data was imported to SPSS (statistical analysis program) in order to conduct a statistical analysis. The whole process is explained in Figure 1: Survey Procedure. Original Figure **Error! Reference source not found.** below.



Figure 1: Survey Procedure. Original Figure

3.2.7 Variables

From the survey the below variables were analyzed:

Categorical variables

- Sex
- Age (for this research age was used only as categorical variable)
- Profession
- Level of education
- Level of education in Marketing
- Offer choice (Refreshments- in two different times, Time 1 and Time 2)
- Offer choice (Car- in two different times, Time 1 and Time 2)
- Option change (between Time 1 and Time 2)

Continuous variables

- Subjective marketing knowledge (in two different times), 5 questions were used to assess the same variable in order to provide reliability to the results. Using SPSS techniques, those 5 questions became one new variable
- Subjective marketing knowledge Time 1 and Time 2

3.3 Results

This study aimed in understanding the consumer behavior process in low and high involvement situations and assess the subjective knowledge of marketing tactics. The final sample consisted of 100 participants and all respective calculations of the final variables were conducted via SPSS (statistical analysis system). Microsoft Office Excel was exploited only for data exporting and Graph creation.

3.3.1 Descriptive analysis – Categorical variables (Demographics)

The first four categories of demographic data are illustrated in Figure 2. In regards to gender, the sample obtained from September 2018's research was split in 54% female and 46% male. This is quite a balanced result with female respondents being only nine more than male.

The same balance did not apply in age groups where the sample is extremely unbalanced with 83% of the respondents belonging to the groups of younger ages (24% in 18-25 and 59% in 26-35). A respectively lower percentage of 12% belonged in the age group of 36-45 and only a 5% in the age group of 46-55. This type of unbalance can be justified due to the fact that questionnaires were forwarded through email and social media, where younger ages mostly use. Also it is a fact that does not prevent research results of being credible since ages of 18 to 46 are proven to be really active consumer wise and tend to make most of their expenditures for new purchases and goods consumption away from home (Bureau and Statistics, 2013).

A rather unbalanced sample is illustrated also in the profession demographics. In this category of demographics data, 65% of respondents declared of being employees in the private sector. Directly next, 12% responded that belongs in the freelancer

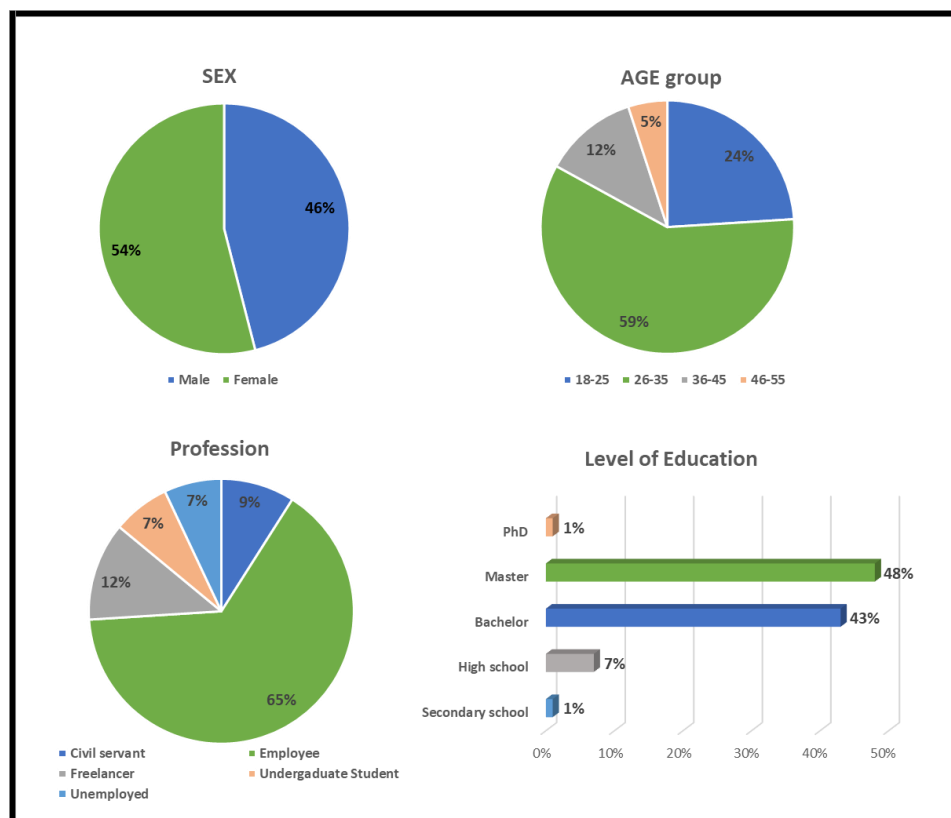


Figure 2: Sample data – Demographics (SEX, AGE group, Profession, Level of Education). Original Figure

category owning a business. 9% of the participants are civil servants, the remaining 14% is split in half in two groups, 7% for unemployed and 7% for students obtaining their bachelor degree. The great concentration in the private sector as well as the 14% for unemployment and undergraduate students mostly derives from the samples ages.

As stated before, the survey was answered only by adults (over the age of eighteen). Although that is the case in the last category of demographics, the level of participants education, varied with 1% being educated only until secondary school and a larger 7% that had finished only high school. Moving higher on the education scale, 43% has obtained a bachelor degree and 48% a Master of Science degree, leaving only 1% that has a PhD. Data seem negatively skewed showcasing a sample highly educated that would assist the research objectives.

The last variable regarding demographics was the educational level of respondents in Marketing and the results are illustrated in Table 1 . According to the table 42% of the respondents has no education in Marketing tactics or consumer behavior context. 26 out of 100 respondents had attended seminars for the respective matter and 15% had obtained a bachelor degree on Marketing. The remaining 17% had obtained a Master's degree on Marketing.

Table 1: Sample data – Demographics. Education in Marketing. Original Table

Education in Marketing		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No education	42	42,0	42,0	42,0
	Seminars	26	26,0	26,0	68,0
	Bachelor	15	15,0	15,0	83,0
	Master	17	17,0	17,0	100,0
	Total	100	100,0	100,0	

3.3.2 Descriptive analysis – Categorical variables (Product offers Time1)

Two different product offerings were illustrated and respondents chose which offer in each case was the most suitable one in terms of cost.

The first product was refreshments and belongs in the low product category involvement due to its nature as a product. Respondents preferences are demonstrated in Table 2: Sample data - Refreshments product offering. The results show that 50% of the participants chose the 3rd option which was in fact the unbiased one with a €0.59-unit price. The remaining 50% was split between the rest choices with 25% choosing the eighteen refreshments offer for €10.84 thinking quickly that it is the cheapest one due to the many units offer and 22% choosing the first option for two refreshments for €1.3 considering it probably the best choice due to the small amount of money to pay. Only 3% needed more information to conclude to a decision, a result highly expected due to the nature of the product, belonging in low involvement category with individuals rarely seeking for more information.

Table 2: Sample data - Refreshments product offering (Time 1). Original Table

Low Involvement Product (Time 1)		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2 Refreshments €1.3	22	22,0	22,0	22,0
	1 dozen + half dozen gift €10.84	25	25,0	25,0	47,0
	5 Refreshments + 1 gift €3.55	50	50,0	50,0	97,0
	Ask for more information	3	3,0	3,0	100,0
	Total	100	100,0	100,0	

The second product offering involved a car purchase and belonged to the high product category involvement. The results are illustrated in Table 3. As demonstrated 34% of participants chose the first option which was the unbiased one and the best option from the perspective of a value for money offer. The second preferred option was a “Car with 2 year warranty & 6 months service for €15.000” with 31% preference. 21% of respondents in this product choice offer, stated that they would seek for more information before their final choice, a percentage much higher than the 3% showcased in the above low product category involvement. The remaining 14% chose the second option that in that case was the decoy option, inferior to option three.

Table 3: Sample data- Car product offering (Time 1). Original Table

High Involvement Product (Time1)		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Car with 2Y warranty + 1Y service €15.300	34	34,0	34,0	34,0
	Car with 2Y warranty €15.000	14	14,0	14,0	48,0
	Car with 2Y warranty + 6months service €15.000	31	31,0	31,0	79,0
	Ask for more information	21	21,0	21,0	100,0
	Total	100	100,0	100,0	

3.3.3 Descriptive analysis – Categorical variables (Product offers Time2)

At this point respondents have been already introduced to basic marketing manipulation techniques and answered questions testing their subjective knowledge on these particular techniques. Data as illustrated in Table 4 showcase a difference in the respondent's preference at this time comparing to Time 1. The most preferred choice now remained the third one “5 Refreshments & 1 gift for €3.55” but with a higher percentage of 77%, a 54% increase in preference comparing to Time 1. At the same time, the first option of “2 Refreshments for €1.3” collected a 10% preference, showcasing a decrease of 45% and the second option which was the biased one

collected a 12%, showing a decrease of 48% comparing to Time 1. Commonly, at Time 2 only 1% asked for more information.

Table 4: Sample data- Refreshments product offering (Time 2). Original Table

Low Involvement Product (Time 2)	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
2 Refreshments €1.3	10	10,0	10,0	10,0
1 dozen + half dozen gift €10.84	12	12,0	12,0	22,0
Valid 5 Refreshments + 1 gift €3.55	77	77,0	77,0	99,0
Ask for more information	1	1,0	1,0	100,0
Total	100	100,0	100,0	

Following the above results, data collected at Time 2 (Table 5) for the car offerings demonstrated a different pattern compared to Time 1 data. Here 57% of respondents chose option one which is in fact the most value for money option. Next in their preference came the “Ask for more information option collecting a 26% and 14% of respondents chose the “Car with 2 year warranty & 6 months service for €15.000”. The decoy option “Car with 2 year warranty for €15.000” was chosen only from 3% of respondents counter to the responses in Time 1 where this option was preferred by 14%. Once again in a high product category involvement situation there are many respondents that ask for more information and there is a great difference between those asking for more information regarding the refreshments offer.

Table 5: Sample data- Car product offering (Time 2). Original Table

High Involvement Product (Time 2)	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Car with 2Y warranty + 1Y service €15.300	57	57,0	57,0	57,0
Car with 2Y warranty €15.000	3	3,0	3,0	60,0
Valid Car with 2Y warranty + 6months service €15.000	14	14,0	14,0	74,0
Ask for more information	26	26,0	26,0	100,0
Total	100	100,0	100,0	

The abovementioned data from Time 2 regarding the two different product category offers, showcase a change in both cases with respondents shifting their answers from Time 1 to Time 2 of the survey (Figure 3).

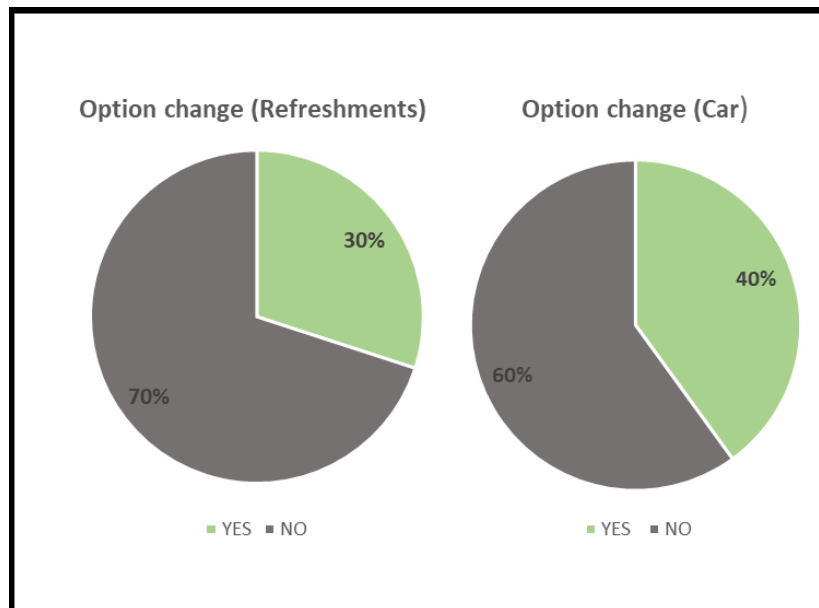


Figure 3: Data analysis – Respondents shifting offer option between Time1 & Time 2

3.3.4 Descriptive analysis – Continuous variables

The subjective knowledge of respondents was tested in two times. Using the data gathered, we started by interpreting them from the descriptive statistics (Table 7). Subjective marketing knowledge at Time 1 has a mean of 3.85 while in Time 2 mean is 3.57 indicating slightly a difference in sample scores from two times. For assessing the data further a significance level of .05 was used. The Std. deviation on both times is quite small (Time 1 0.742 & Time 2 0.763), showcasing a concentration of most of the results towards the mean.

Moving to the skewness and Kurtosis values and following the rule that implies a normally distributed sample would obtain a skewness and kurtosis of 0 we came with a skewness of -1.103 and kurtosis of 1.269 for Time 1. A 0 skewness is rarely found in the social sciences. Time 1's negative skewness indicates a concentration of scores at the high end (right hand side of the graph) which is illustrated also in the histogram (Figure 4).

Table 6: Continuous variables time1 & time2. Original table

Case Processing Summary						
	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
time1	100	100,0%	0	0,0%	100	100,0%
time2	100	100,0%	0	0,0%	100	100,0%

Table 7: Descriptives for Subjective knowledge Time 1 & Time 2. Original Table

Descriptives			Statistic	Std. Error
time1	Mean		3,85	,074
	95% Confidence Interval for	Lower Bound	3,70	
	Mean	Upper Bound	4,00	
	5% Trimmed Mean		3,90	
	Median		4,00	
	Variance		,550	
	Std. Deviation		,742	
	Minimum		1	
	Maximum		5	
	Range		4	
	Interquartile Range		1	
	Skewness		-1,103	,241
	Kurtosis		1,269	,478
	Mean		3,57	,076
	95% Confidence Interval for	Lower Bound	3,41	
	Mean	Upper Bound	3,72	
time2	5% Trimmed Mean		3,60	
	Median		3,80	
	Variance		,583	
	Std. Deviation		,763	
	Minimum		1	
	Maximum		5	
	Range		4	
	Interquartile Range		1	
	Skewness		-,660	,241
	Kurtosis		,543	,478

Kurtosis at Time 1 for subjective knowledge scores is 1.269, indicating that scores are clustered mostly in the center and distribution is rather peaked with long thin tails. Moving to the same metrics but for Time 2 there are differences indicating early on a difference in participants answers from Time 1 to Time 2. Skewness is negative again in Time 2 but quite smaller at -0.660 and kurtosis also smaller 0.543. This difference might indicate that in Time 2 scores were again skewed to the right side with more scores between 3-5 but the responses given were smaller (less confident) than the responses at Time 1. All the above are depicted in the two histograms below that represent the frequency of the results and asses the normality of the two distributions Time 1 and Time 2 (Figure 4 & Figure 5).

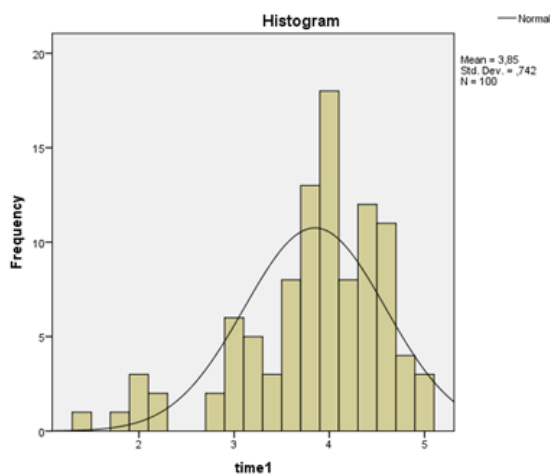


Figure 5: Histogram Time 1 – Frequency of scores for subjective knowledge. Original figure

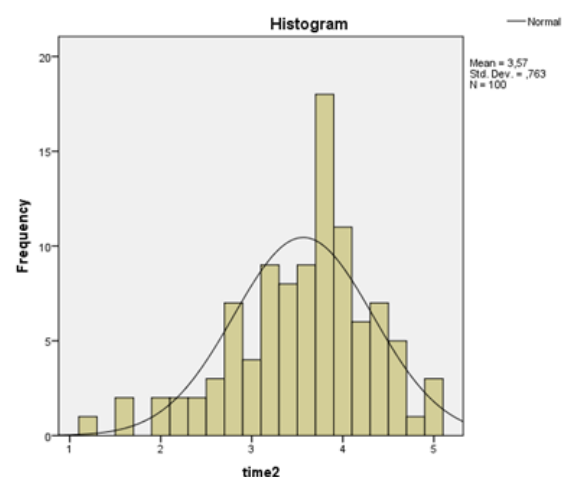


Figure 4: Histogram Time 2 – Frequency of scores for subjective knowledge. Original Figure

A test of Normality was conducted showing that in both cases results are non-normally distributed since significance level as demonstrated in Table 8 for Time 1 is 0.000 and for Time 2 0.008 both smaller than 0.05.

Table 8: Descriptive statistics- Continuous variables normality test. Original figure

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
time1	,164	100	,000	,915	100	,000
time2	,130	100	,000	,964	100	,008

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

In the next chapter an inferential analysis was conducted between those two continuous variables and since they are non-normally distributed, the test used for the inferential analysis was the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test.

3.3.5 Inferential analysis

In order to explore the hypothesis of whether or not participants will change their answers on the subjective marketing knowledge form Time 1 to Time 2 after being introduced to specific marketing tactics, an inferential analysis was performed using non-parametric statistics running the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test (Table 11).

Table 9: Inferential analysis- descriptive statistics of N. Original table

Descriptive Statistics				
	N	Percentiles		
		25th	50th (Median)	75th
time1	100	3,60	4,00	4,40
time2	100	3,20	3,80	4,00

Table 11: Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test. Original table

Test Statistics ^a	
	time2 - time1
Z	-6,735 ^b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,000

Table 10: Inferential analysis – ranks. Original table

Ranks			
time2 - time1	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Negative Ranks	59 ^a	30,00	1770,00
Positive Ranks	0 ^b	,00	,00
Ties	41 ^c		
Total	100		

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

b. Based on positive ranks.

a. time2 < time1 b. time2 > time1 c. time2 = time1

After assessing the results of the test, we concluded that our score sets are significantly different since in Table 11 at the Wilcoxon test the associated significance levels were presented as Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) and were 0.000 (which really means less than 0.0005), less than 0.05.

To ensure credibility and measure the effect size the below calculations were conducted. Since SPSS does not present a specific formula for measuring the effect size, we manually performed the computation. We divided the Z value with the square route of N. For this calculation we ignored any negative sign out of the front of the Z value. In this situation N is the number of observations over the 2 time points, not the number of the cases so $N=200$ and $Z=6,735$ (Table 9 & Table 11).

The result for the effect size was ~ 0.48 . According to Cohen (1988) criteria for effect size (.1= small effect, .3= medium effect, .5= large effect), and the above Wilcoxon test results we concluded that a Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test revealed a statistically significant reduction in subjective marketing knowledge following the samples' exposure to actual marketing techniques, with $z= -6.73$ with a large effect size ($r= 0.48$). The median score for subjective marketing knowledge also decreased from pre-exposure ($Md=4$) to post exposure to marketing tactics ($Md=3.8$).

4. Discussion

This is the last chapter of this thesis and aims to discuss all abovementioned data gathered comparing them with previous studies. Future recommendations for further exploring the subject are presented and the limitations of the study are analyzed.

4.1 Findings and future recommendations

Each year that passes individuals get introduced to large amounts of information, aiming to inform them about new products and services. This information is analyzed differently by each person and by the nature of the good itself. It is extremely important to explore how individuals process this information, come to decisions and actually consider education as a factor that could potentially help making biased every day decisions, unbiased. Two basic objectives were explored in this thesis, the decision-making process in low and high involvement situations and the affect of marketing knowledge in the process.

One hundred people participated in this survey online. The sample for the demographics was balanced for the sex category as 54% were females and 46% males. This balance gives a credibility to the results in terms of questions being answered by almost equally men and women. In this study sex did not influence so much the results and wasn't one of the main variables to be tested. Moving to age, there was not the same balance as 59%, the majority of the respondents belonged in the 26-35 group, 24% in 18-24 group and 12% in the age group of 36-45. The remaining 5% belonged in the age group of 46-55. Previous studies have demonstrated that age can be a variable that boosts participants willingness to participate in questionnaires as Bista (2017) noted. According to those researchers', people between the age of 26-45 appear to participate more actively in surveys and this is also demonstrated by the sample of this study. The age unbalance of the sample is a factor that does not prevent the credibility of the research since ages of 18-46 are characterized as highly active consumers (Bureau and Statistics, 2013). The sample was also unbalanced in the profession category with 65% of the respondents being employees, 12% freelancers, 9% civil servants, 7% undergraduate students and 7% unemployed. The next category analyzed was the educational level of participants, with 1% of respondents being educated until secondary school and 7% until high school. The majority of the respondents was highly educated with 43% obtaining a bachelor degree, 48% an MSc and 1% a PhD. This 93% of highly educated sample can also be correlated with other surveys results that state that respondents on surveys are mostly highly educated people (Ericsson and Smith, 1991). The last category involved education but specifically asked the respondents to fill their educational level in the subject of marketing. The majority of the respondents, 42%, had no education in the field of marketing and 26% had attended seminars. The remaining 32% was split in the 15% of respondents with a bachelor degree in marketing and a 17% with a Masters degree.

After the analysis of demographics, the first objective of the decision making process in low and high involvement situations, was analyzed descriptively by the findings of the surveys' product offering questions. As mentioned in the Methodology chapter participants were presented with two different product offerings, refreshments (low

involvement) and car (high involvement). According to the literacy consumers in high involvement conditions, are most likely to seek for much more information and features of the product or service, before concluding to a decision (Ahmed *et al.*, 2004; Erevelles, 1998; Johar and Sirgy, 1991), while on the other hand individuals under low involvement conditions, do not seek much more information than the already available information engaging in routine decisions (Coulter, 2005). These notions were confirmed in a small scale by this surveys results. Respondents answered the questions relevant to the product offerings two times. For the first product, refreshments, in time 1 only 3% of respondents asked for more information for the product and in Time 2 only 1%. Although there were no product characteristics available, participants in this low involvement product category did not seek for additional information and simply made a choice. On the other hand, for the second product, car, results were much more different in both times. For this product, 21% of respondents asked for more information before making a decision at Time 1 and 26% at Time 2. This big difference in individual's choice strengthens the notions of humans seeking for more information mainly in high involvement situations.

Also, at the same subject we used some biases in the answers given to test if participants will fall for those biases or not based on previous theories. For refreshments we used real offers that make consumers pick the bigger quantity without calculating the amount payed and for the category of high involvement, the car, we used a decoy option to check if it would manipulate the answers. The analysis here was superficial as we have just illustrated the sample's preferences where in Time 1 for the refreshments, 50% of the participants chose the best option "5 refreshments & 1 gift for €3.55" where in the car category answers were split between the unbiased most attractive option of "Car with 2 years warranty & 1 year service for €15.300" collecting 34% and the "Car with 2 years warranty & 6 months service for €15.000" collecting 31%. These results are a little contradictory to previous studies that clearly suggest individuals will follow a highly diagnostic route avoiding cognitive biases in high involvement situations, where the opposite will happen in low involvement with consumers falling in cognitive traps (Brown, Homer and Inman, 1998; Coulter and Punj, 2004).

After participants got exposed in specific marketing tactics, they were asked again the same 2 questions and at this point there are many differences in the results. For the first product at Time 2 respondents' preference on the unbiased option increased by 54% reaching a 77% selection. The second option which was in fact the biased one had a decrease at Time 2 from Time 1 of 48%, collecting only 12% preference. The same pattern with difference from Time 1 to Time 2 was also demonstrated in the second product, the car. In this case option 1 which was in fact the unbiased option was picked by 57% of respondents, demonstrating a 67% increase in preference compared to Time 1. The decoy option of "Car with 2 year warranty for €15.000" was only chosen this time by 3% of the respondents showing a decrease in preference. 14% of participants chose option three while in Time 1 option three was chosen by 31%. These big differences in answers are indicative of a relationship between participants exposure to true marketing tactics examples and their decisions shifting. Since it is a matter highly connected to behavior and psychology it would be recommended to apply these examples in an experiment with participants live in future research, so as

to notice and explore the level of respondent's actual change of choice, or their answering by chance.

One extra variable analyzed in two times in this survey was marketing knowledge and more specifically subjective knowledge. Scholars note that individuals' information processing and decision making system, gets highly affected by their knowledge and as already mentioned in the chapter of literature review knowledge can be divided in three categories, the objective, the subjective and prior experience (Brucks, 2014; Carlson *et al.*, 2009a). Specifically, this research examined participants subjective knowledge to the field of marketing as well as if there is a chance this knowledge could get affected by simply presenting to respondents' examples of marketing tactics. This variable was picked because of its nature. This type of knowledge is not only correlated with an individuals consumer behavior, but is also related to information searching, thus extremely relevant also to the above two categories of low and high involvement (Fitzgerald-butt *et al.*, 2017).

Only after checking the descriptive statistics of the results, we found that they were different from Time 1 to Time 2. There was a difference in skewness (Time 1 -1.103 & Time 2 -0.660), kurtosis (Time 1 1.269 & Time 2 0.543) and of course mean and median were different (Mean t1 3.85 & Mean t2 3.57). Skewness at both times showed that participants are highly confident about their knowledge, but in Time 2 although they remained confident, this confidence shrank compared to Time 1. These results showcase a difference but to enhance this hypothesis we used an inferential analysis using a statistical test to measure whether or not there is in fact a relationship between those two variables and if this change is developed by participants exposure to marketing techniques. The statistical test demonstrated that in fact the two score sets are significantly different with a large effect size of 0.48. This finding is a small implication towards a new research path of finding ways to educate consumers in persuasion and marketing techniques. In the relevant literacy there are no specific results on how to educate individuals regarding marketing techniques (Bither, Dolich and Nell, 1971; McGuire, 1964; Szybillo and Heslin, 1973). This survey tested whether or not participants will change their scores of knowledge after being introduced to simple examples of previous marketing tactics, and they did change their subjective knowledge levels. It is recommended for future researches to explore even further the level of this change as well as different ways of educating participants. Also, in this research there was no time for exploring the objective knowledge in the matter which could be a future research giving impressive results.

4.2 Limitations

The survey designed had a few limitations. As it was a survey computerized and completed online, many participants could have just guessed the answers and statistical analysis cannot measure guesses. Also, to better explore the hypothesis of choice and perception change an experiment would be the best approach since this research concluded inevitably in subjective results since there was no time or means to support an experimental research. Further studies could explore in the future the level of objective knowledge in marketing tactics and result in more informed behaviors regarding goods purchasing and the general approach to persuasion.

Conclusions

Over the last decades the field of consumer behaviour is thoroughly studied. What lacks in this field is a way of educating consumers in their behaviour and the cognitive biases marketers take advantage of in different involvement conditions. This study is not in any way a study that identifies marketing as a bad influence to consumers, but rather illustrates if there is a window in making decisions more rationale and consumer centric rather than biased. The results of this study demonstrated an opening in consumer knowledge in marketing. The subjective knowledge of consumers gets highly affected after their exposure to examples of real marketing tactics, thus an education plan can be formatted after this field is studied. It is recommended that consumers could be studied in experiments that take more time than a simple survey in order to assess the level of their cognitive capacity and objective knowledge in the marketing and consumer behaviour field and after that educational programmes could be developed. Individuals as consumers should lead the consumer decision making process, not being led by external factors.

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Appendix

Ερωτηματολόγιο για την καταναλωτική συμπεριφορά

Σας ευχαριστούμε πολύ για το χρόνο που θα μας αφιερώσετε και τη βοήθεια σας στην προσπάθειά μας. Το ερωτηματολόγιο θα πρέπει να συμπληρωθεί μόνο από άτομα άνω των 18 ετών. Το παρόν ερωτηματολόγιο έχει συνταχθεί στα πλαίσια εκπόνησης διπλωματικής εργασίας στο Διεθνές Πανεπιστήμιο Ελλάδος και έχει ως σκοπό να ερευνήσει την καταναλωτική συμπεριφορά των πολιτών και την εξοικείωσή τους με διάφορες πρακτικές marketing. Οι απαντήσεις σας θα παραμείνουν εμπιστευτικές και θα χρησιμοποιηθούν αποκλειστικά και μόνο για τους σκοπούς της παρούσας μελέτης. Παρακαλούμε να απαντήσετε τις ερωτήσεις με τη σειρά και να μην επιστρέψετε σε προηγούμενες. Η έρευνα είναι ανώνυμη και θα θέλαμε να απαντήσετε με ειλικρίνεια. Τα στοιχεία του ερωτηματολογίου χρησιμοποιούνται για καθαρά ερευνητικούς-επιστημονικούς λόγους. Για τη συμπλήρωσή του χρειάζονται περίπου δεκαπέντε λεπτά. Ευχαριστούμε εκ των προτέρων για το χρόνο και τη συνεργασία σας. Για πιθανές απορίες και σχόλια παρακαλούμε όπως επικοινωνήσετε με το email tekidou.apostolia@gmail.com.

1.ΔΗΜΟΓΡΑΦΙΚΑ ΣΤΟΙΧΕΙΑ

1.1 Φύλο

Άντρας	
Γυναίκα	

1.2 Ηλικιακή ομάδα

18-25	
26-35	
36-45	
46-55	
56+	

1.3 Επάγγελμα

Δημόσιος Υπάλληλος	
Ιδιωτικός Υπάλληλος	
Ελεύθερος επαγγελματίας	
Συνταξιούχος	
Οικιακά	
Φοιτητής	
Άνεργος	

1.4 Μορφωτικό επίπεδο

Δημοτικό	
Γυμνάσιο	
Λύκειο	

Πανεπιστήμιο	
Μεταπτυχιακό	
Διδακτορικό	

1.5 Μορφωτικό επίπεδο σε θέματα Marketing

Καμία εκπαίδευση	
Σεμινάρια	
Πανεπιστήμιο	
Μεταπτυχιακό	
Διδακτορικό	

2.ΕΠΙΛΟΓΗ ΠΡΟΪΟΝΤΟΣ-ΠΡΟΣΦΟΡΑΣ

2.1 Από τις παρακάτω επιλογές επιλέξτε την προσφορά που θα αγοράζατε αν βρισκόσασταν στη διαδικασία αγοράς αναψυκτικών (οι παρακάτω προσφορές αφορούν το ίδιο αναψυκτικό)

2 αναψυκτικά 1.30€	
2 εξάδες + 1 εξάδα δώρο 10.84€	
5 αναψυκτικά + 1 δώρο 3.55€	
Θα αναζητήσω επιπλέον πληροφορίες	

2.2 Από τις παρακάτω επιλογές επιλέξτε την προσφορά που θα αγοράζατε αν βρισκόσασταν στη διαδικασία αγοράς νέου αυτοκινήτου (οι παρακάτω προσφορές αφορούν το ίδιο αυτοκίνητο)

Αυτοκίνητο με 2 χρόνια εγγύηση και δωρεάν service για το 1ο χρόνο 15.300€	
Αυτοκίνητο με 2 χρόνια εγγύηση 15.000€	
Αυτοκίνητο με 2 χρόνια εγγύηση και δωρεάν service για το 1ο εξάμηνο 15.000€	
Θα αναζητήσω επιπλέον πληροφορίες	

3.ΚΑΤΑΝΟΗΣΗ ΚΑΙ ΓΝΩΣΗ ΕΝΟΙΩΝ

Στις επόμενες πέντε ερωτήσεις παρακαλούμε να απαντήσετε από το 1 έως το 5 όπου:

1=Διαφωνώ απόλυτα, 3=ούτε συμφωνώ ούτε διαφωνώ και 5= Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

3.1 Γνωρίζω τις τακτικές που ακολουθεί το marketing των εταιρειών για να κατευθύνει τους καταναλωτές προς μία απόφαση;

1	2	3	4	5

3.2 Γνωρίζω ότι ως καταναλωτές πολλές φορές επιλέγουμε την «εύκολη»-διαθέσιμη επιλογή με βάση τις πληροφορίες που μας δίνονται για ένα προϊόν χωρίς επιπλέον ανάλυση;

1	2	3	4	5
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3.3 Γνωρίζω ότι σε πολλές περιπτώσεις οι τιμές που αναφέρονται ως προσφορές είναι στην πραγματικότητα οι πραγματικές τιμές των προϊόντων και αυτό αποτελεί μια τεχνική του marketing που εκμεταλλεύεται την τάση των ανθρώπων να επιλέγουν την πρώτη πληροφορία που θα έχουν διαθέσιμη;

1	2	3	4	5

3.4 Γνωρίζω ότι υπάρχουν «εικονικές» προσφορές σε προϊόντα με μόνη χρήση να καθοδηγήσουν τους καταναλωτές στην επιλογή μιας συγκεκριμένης προσφοράς;

1	2	3	4	5

3.5 Γνωρίζω ότι ο τρόπος διατύπωσης μίας προσφοράς μπορεί να επηρεάσει την τελική απόφαση των καταναλωτών;

1	2	3	4	5

4. ΠΑΡΑΔΕΙΓΜΑΤΑ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ

Στο παρακάτω κείμενο θα έρθετε σε επαφή με πραγματικά παραδείγματα πρακτικών marketing που επηρέασαν τις αποφάσεις και συμπεριφορές των ερωτηθέντων. Εφόσον διαβάσετε το κείμενο παρακαλείστε να απαντήσετε και στις τελευταίες ερωτήσεις.

Παράδειγμα Ι

Προσφορά συνδρομής

Το περιοδικό Χ ανακοινώνει τις παρακάτω προσφορές για συνδρομές:

1. Online συνδρομή με 30€
2. Συνδρομή για φωτοαντίγραφα με 50€
3. Συνδρομή online ΚΑΙ για φωτοαντίγραφα με 50€

Ανάμεσα στις παραπάνω επιλογές:

- Η 3η ήταν αυτή που προτιμήθηκε από το 84% όσων απάντησαν σε έρευνα που διεξήχθη.
- Δεν επέλεξε κανένας την 2η επιλογή.
- Η 1^η επιλογή συγκεντρώνει 16%.

Εφόσον κανένας δεν επέλεξε την επιλογή νούμερο 2, αφαιρέθηκε από τις επιλογές με αποτέλεσμα στην επόμενη έρευνα οι επιλογές να είναι οι παρακάτω:

1. Online συνδρομή με 30€
2. Συνδρομή online ΚΑΙ για φωτοαντίγραφα με 50€

Σε αυτή την περίπτωση:

- Η 1η επιλογή έγινε η πιο δημοφιλής συγκεντρώνοντας το 68% των απαντήσεων

- Η 2η το 32%.

Παρατηρείτε λοιπόν πως μία απλή επιπλέον επιλογή μπορεί να κατευθύνει την απόφαση ενός καταναλωτή.

Παράδειγμα II

Φόρμα συγκατάθεσης

Η Γερμανία και η Αυστρία είναι δύο χώρες αρκετά κοντά σε κουλτούρα. Όσον αφορά τη δωρεά οργάνων έχουν τεράστια απόκλιση στο ποσοστό των ανθρώπων που επιθυμούν σε κάθε χώρα να γίνουν δωρητές οργάνων (Γερμανία 12%- Αυστρία 99%). Η απάντηση σε ένα μεγάλο βαθμό κρύβεται στην φόρμα συμπλήρωσης για τη δωρεά οργάνων.

Η φόρμα στη Γερμανία ολοκληρώνεται με την εξής επιλογή:

*Βάλτε X στο κουτάκι αν επιθυμείτε να συμμετάσχετε στο πρόγραμμα δωρεάς οργάνων

Η φόρμα στην Αυστρία ολοκληρώνεται με την εξής επιλογή:

*Βάλτε X στο κουτάκι αν ΔΕΝ επιθυμείτε να συμμετάσχετε στο πρόγραμμα δωρεάς οργάνων

Παρατηρείτε λοιπόν πως ο τρόπος διατύπωσης μπορεί να επηρεάσει ακόμα και τις πολύ σημαντικές αποφάσεις της ζωής μας.

5.ΕΠΙΛΟΓΗ ΠΡΟΪΟΝΤΟΣ-ΠΡΟΣΦΟΡΑΣ

5.1 Από τις παρακάτω επιλογές επιλέξτε την προσφορά που θα αγοράζατε αν βρισκόσασταν στη διαδικασία αγοράς αναψυκτικών (οι παρακάτω προσφορές αφορούν το ίδιο αναψυκτικό)

2 αναψυκτικά 1.30€	
2 εξάδες + 1 εξάδα δώρο 10.84€	
5 αναψυκτικά + 1 δώρο 3.55€	
Θα αναζητήσω επιπλέον πληροφορίες	

5.2 Από τις παρακάτω επιλογές επιλέξτε την προσφορά που θα αγοράζατε αν βρισκόσασταν στη διαδικασία αγοράς νέου αυτοκινήτου (οι παρακάτω προσφορές αφορούν το ίδιο αυτοκίνητο)

Αυτοκίνητο με 2 χρόνια εγγύηση και δωρεάν service για το 1ο χρόνο 15.300€	
Αυτοκίνητο με 2 χρόνια εγγύηση 15.000€	
Αυτοκίνητο με 2 χρόνια εγγύηση και δωρεάν service για το 1ο εξάμηνο 15.000€	
Θα αναζητήσω επιπλέον πληροφορίες	

6.ΚΑΤΑΝΟΗΣΗ ΚΑΙ ΓΝΩΣΗ ΕΝΟΙΩΝ

Στις επόμενες πέντε ερωτήσεις παρακαλούμε να απαντήσετε από το 1 έως το 5 όπου:

1=Διαφωνώ απόλυτα, 3=ούτε συμφωνώ ούτε διαφωνώ και 5= Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

6.1 Γνωρίζω τις τακτικές που ακολουθεί το marketing των εταιρειών για να κατευθύνει τους καταναλωτές προς μία απόφαση;

1	2	3	4	5

6.2 Γνωρίζω ότι ως καταναλωτές πολλές φορές επιλέγουμε την «εύκολη»-διαθέσιμη επιλογή με βάση τις πληροφορίες που μας δίνονται για ένα προϊόν χωρίς επιπλέον ανάλυση;

1	2	3	4	5

6.3 Γνωρίζω ότι σε πολλές περιπτώσεις οι τιμές που αναφέρονται ως προσφορές είναι στην πραγματικότητα οι πραγματικές τιμές των προϊόντων και αυτό αποτελεί μια τεχνική του marketing που εκμεταλλεύεται την τάση των ανθρώπων να επιλέγουν την πρώτη πληροφορία που θα έχουν διαθέσιμη;

1	2	3	4	5

6.4 Γνωρίζω ότι υπάρχουν «εικονικές» προσφορές σε προϊόντα με μόνη χρήση να καθοδηγήσουν τους καταναλωτές στην επιλογή μιας συγκεκριμένης προσφοράς;

1	2	3	4	5

6.5 Γνωρίζω ότι ο τρόπος διατύπωσης μίας προσφοράς μπορεί να επηρεάσει την τελική απόφαση των καταναλωτών;

1	2	3	4	5

Σας ευχαριστούμε πολύ για το χρόνο σας